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GENU, GENUS

The Latin words *genu* and *genus* by the similarity of their form as well as by that of their equivalents in Greek, Sanskrit, etc., have often suggested the possibility of a relationship between them. In a note in the *Wochenschrift für klassische Philologie* (XXXIV [1917], No. 16, cols. 377 f.) Wessely adds to our general store of information on the subject the fact that in Slavic we have two words, *koleno* and *pokoleni*, the former meaning either *genu* or *genus*, while the latter, itself a derivative of the former, is used to express one phase of *genus* "generation." These Slavic words are, of course, not etymologically connected with *genu* or *genus*. Wessely's suggestion therefore adds a very interesting and persuasive bit of evidence for the theory that *genu* and *genus* are related. But there still remains the question, Why should two ideas so far apart as those of "knee" and "generation" be expressed by the same word?

Perhaps we have the key to the reason for this curious fact in our possession and need only to make the proper connection. In one of the Homeric *Hymns* (i. 115 f.), we have the following passage:

εὐτ' ἐπὶ Δήλου ἔβαινε μογοστόκος Εἰλείθνια,
τὴν τότε δὴ τόκος εἶλε, μενούησεν δὲ τεκέσθαι.
ἀμφὶ δὲ φοῖνικι βάλε πῆχες, γούνα δ' ἔρεισε
λειμῶνι μαλακῶ, μείδησε δὲ γαῖ' ὑπέρερθεν·

This passage proves that the kneeling position of a woman at childbirth was well known; for otherwise it would be impossible for the poet to introduce this description in such a matter-of-fact way. Frazer in his notes on Pausanias (viii. 48.7) gives further evidence on this point. Commenting on the image of "Auge on her Knees" he says:

The image appears to have been that of a woman on her knees in the act of childbirth. So Latona brought forth Apollo and Artemis kneeling on the soft meadow (Homer *Hymn to the Delian Apollo* 116 ff.). On the Capitol at Rome, in front of the temple of Minerva, there were images representing three male figures on their knees; they were called *Di Nixi* and were supposed to be deities who presided over childbirth. These images had been brought to Rome from the East after the war with Antiochus, or, according to others, from the sack of Corinth (Festus, pp. 174, 176 [ed. Müller]). The images of Damia and Auxesia, goddesses of fertility, represented them kneeling (Herodotus v. 86), probably in the act of childbearing. Some years ago a mutilated marble group was found at Magoula, near Sparta, which appears to have represented a woman kneeling just after delivery (see Fr. Marx, "Marmorgruppe aus Sparta," *Mittheil. d. arch. Inst. in Athen*, X [1885], 177-99).

In addition to these examples one might perhaps cite the group known as the "Birth of Aphrodite," which seems to be rather a woman awaiting her accouchement (see Mach's *Handbook*, pp. 99, 100, and *University Prints*,

Series A, No. 94). From these bits of evidence it is safe to assume with Frazer that the kneeling position was a common one. Ploss (*Das Weib*, II, 161 [6th ed.]) informs us that this position is used in Greece as well as in other countries.

One of the objections that might be raised against this explanation is the fact that the root *ġen* is commonly used of the male, "beget." But it is frequently enough used also of the female, "bear." (And it is difficult to disbelieve the ultimate connection with the root of Skt. *jānī*, Gr. *γυνή*, Slav. *žena*, "woman," despite the conflict in the character of the initial guttural.) The probability is that "beget" was originally an extended use of "bear," for its very nature would make the phenomenon of childbirth prior in its consideration by the primitive mind to the idea of begetting.

The Bohemian word *pokoleni* seems to be formed from *koleno* after the analogy of verbal nouns belonging to verbs compounded with *po*, such as *poručeni* "a command," *postoupeni* "advancement," *posvěcení* "a consecration," etc. Its literal meaning would then be "kneeling," for in Slavic the word "to kneel" is represented by a totally different root. Is it therefore not possible that we have a word *genus* from a word *genu* because a generation in the early days of at least a considerable part of our race was a matter of getting down on the knees?

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[For the Slavic words, the *genus* use is most simply derived from the *genu* use through the medium of "bend, branch," etc. Cf. *Archiv f. Slav. Phil.*, XXX, 296; Berneker, *Slav. et. Wtb.*, p. 546.—C. D. B.]

NOTE ON ὡς ἐγῶμαι AND PLATO *PROTAGORAS* 336 D

μετὰ δὲ τὸν Ἀλκιβιάδην ὡς ἐγῶμαι Κριτίας ἦν ὁ εἰπών.

Professor Wilamowitz' comment on this *Platon* i. 138, n. 1, is: "Das eine Mal, wo Kritias das wort nimmt, 336d, ist Sokrates nicht ganz sicher, wer der Redende war. Es soll auf ihn nichts ankommen, aber ganz stumm soll er doch nicht bleiben." This may sound plausible to anyone who thinks ὡς ἐγῶμαι in literal English or German translation. In point of fact, however, this frequent Platonic phrase or idiom does not suggest uncertainty or doubt. In *Phaedo* 98 E it is employed in the confident assertion of fundamental truth: ἐπεὶ νῆ τὸν κύνα ὡς ἐγῶμαι, etc. In *Crito* 46 D it reaffirms essential Platonic moral principles. In *Cratylus* 386 C it accompanies a very positive statement of Socrates. In *Charmides* 167 E it confirms a strong inductive instance. In *Republic* 369 B it announces a theory of which Socrates has no doubt. In *Euthyphron* 7 C it supports the Platonic principle that weighing and measuring end debate.